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THE RED CROSS

IN CHARGE OF

JANE A. DELANO, R.N.

Chairman of the National Committee on Red Cross Nursing Service

TOWN AND COUNTRY NURSING SERVICE

BY FANNIE F. CLEMENT, R.N.

Abbie Roberts, a graduate of the Jewish Hospital of Cincinnati, has been appointed a supervisor of the Red Cross visiting nurses. Miss Roberts has had experience in both the infant-welfare and tuberculosis departments of the Board of Health of that city. Following ten months as visiting nurse at Henry Street Settlement, New York, she returned to her native city and organized the Visiting Nursing Association of Cincinnati which, now four years old, has nineteen nurses on its staff. Miss Roberts assumes her new duties with the Red Cross, having just completed five months' study in the Department of Nursing and Health at Teachers College. On duty in Hamilton at the time of the Ohio flood disaster, she rendered valuable services as a Red Cross nurse.

Through affiliation with the Town and Country Nursing Service, local nursing associations in small communities accept a general supervision of their local work by the Red Cross, which, however, in no way interferes with their autonomy or relieves them of any local responsibility. By making regular visits to the various affiliated organizations we shall be in a position to advise and help both nurses and their associations in developing their work along approved lines. With the growth of the Town and Country Nursing Service, there will be a corresponding need of other supervisors who, it is hoped, through regular and frequent visits may be of real assistance to the nurses in the field.

Five nurses have entered the course which began in February, given in connection with the Department of Nursing and Health of Teachers College, in preparation for Red Cross visiting nursing. This course includes lectures on rural social problems which should reveal to the student nurse the broad scope of the activities of rural nursing and the relation these bear to the whole social program for the improvement of living conditions in the small community.

It is expected that an exhibit of the Town and Country Nursing Service will be sent to the convention at St. Louis the last week in April, where those who are interested in getting an idea of the work of a rural nurse may have an opportunity to read, by means of charts and photographs, the story of Miss Friend, the Red Cross visiting nurse of Littletown, on her round of daily visits.

Reports from the visiting nurses who acted as agents in their communities for the sale of Red Cross Christmas seals, show that this measure for spreading knowledge of hygiene and for raising funds for the work of their nursing associations is one worthy of the consideration of other associations in small communities which are responsible for the care of tuberculosis patients. The seal was used as the subject of essays by school children, who in many places became enthusiastic agents for the sale of the seals. Ready assistance came also from the Boy Scouts and other organizations of young persons.

The following story of a baby contest comes from one of the visiting nurses in South Carolina:

At the County Fair held last November, I was asked to give a practical demonstration of child-welfare work in connection with the Board of Health exhibit. Municipal and medical coöperation were obtained. The idea naturally appealed to mothers. Plans were discussed, literature, charts and statistics secured, and the local papers kept the subject before the public by running a column about the Better-Babies Contest in their daily issues for a couple of weeks before the opening of the fair.

Soon the whole county was astir with excited mothers who had read that one, out of five babies born, died before it was one year old, and that more than half the deaths among children were due to preventable causes, often due to ignorance and lack of training.

The newspaper reporters explained through their columns that the baby show was not a beauty show but a health contest, that beauty played no part in it except as it made for health, all healthy babies being beautiful. In that way we hoped to attract the great rank and file of babies, undressed babies instead of the exceptional child with the wonderful frilly, lacy, be-ribboned and hand-embroidered dresses so much in evidence at the annual baby beauty-show given here by one of the churches.

The conference was not a clinic—no treatment, no prescription was given. The children were weighed and measured. The circumference of the head, chest and abdomen were taken, the condition of the skin and firmness of the muscles noted, with due attention given to the teeth, adenoids, tonsils, eyes and ears, by five prominent physicians and one dentist of the city.

At the close of the contest eight medals were awarded—four first prize gold medals and four second prize silver medals. A gold medal each to the most physically perfect boy and girl in the one to two years class; a silver medal or second prize each to the boy and girl standing second in perfection in the same class. A gold medal each to the boy and girl making the highest score in the two to three year class, and silver medals to the second highest boy and girl in the same class.

At the close of the contest each mother was given a score card or record indicating, in simple order, the defects or tendencies needing attention. On the opposite page of the card was printed what is even more valuable, suggestions as to the nutrition and general hygiene of the child. Other valuable literature on the care of the baby was also presented to the mother.

It has been a revelation to see the interest manifested in the contest. Parents from every walk in life brought their children for examination—the college professor, club members, the socially prominent, city men and women, farmers and their wives and parents living in the cotton-mill villages.

The visiting nurse planned a little follow-up work by selecting the six babies making the lowest scores and offering prizes for the two babies showing the greatest improvement during the six months following the awarding of medals. She visits these little unfortunate ones, advising their mothers regarding the welfare of their babies, instructing them in personal hygiene and home sanitation, with special emphasis upon diet, wholesome cooking, soil pollution, the menace of the fly and mosquito, and the importance of screening their houses."

ARKANSAS

THE ARKANSAS BOARD OF NURSE EXAMINERS will hold a meeting May 11, 12, 13, for the purpose of holding examinations. All applications for registration must be on file with the secretary at least ten days prior to that date.

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NORTH DAKOTA

The annual meeting of the State Association will be held in Bismarck, April 21 and 22. The nurses are interested throughout the state and the program presents many good features, chief of which is the presentation of the proposed bill for registration of nurses, by the legislative committee. A circular letter has been sent to each member, and a large attendance is expected. A detailed report of the meeting will appear in the June JOURNAL.